



POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Fall 2017

NEWSLETTER

Member of the American Council for Polish Culture, Inc. since 1966

Artists Among Us

Gordon Kray: Classical Precision and Emotional Effusion

By Danuta Boczar



A visit to an artist's studio is a rare opportunity. The studio is a place where ideas germinate and come to fruition, a place of study and contemplation, a library and a work place, dotted with small clay studies and preparatory maquettes of life-size statues.

The artist in this case is sculptor Gordon Kray, known to long-time PAAA members for the 1990 bronze plaque in Harpers Ferry at the John Brown-Cyprian Norwid Memorial. Mr. Kray, who hails from a Polish-American family in Massachusetts, currently serves as an adjunct professor at Trinity College in Washington, DC., and as an instructor in sculpture at the Smithsonian Institution. After completing a degree in Fine Arts at the College of William and

Gordon Kray: "...my work is based on historical models and modes of expression in combination with my personal sense of expression and composition..."

Mary in Williamsburg, he studied sculpture at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (1975-76). Upon his return to the U.S., he began competing for and receiving commissions, including, in 1984, a statue for Our Lady's Chapel at St. Matthew's Cathedral, and in 1991, the Kahlil Gibran Memorial Garden, located near the Naval Observatory on Massachusetts Avenue. Mr. Kray also executed bronze statuary that now graces the grounds of his alma mater, as well as, possibly soon, Statuary Hall in the US Capitol Building. With many of his works located in the DC metropolitan area and

slightly beyond, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to view these engaging figurative sculptures for ourselves.

Let's start with several major works in the District. As you walk into St. Matthew's Cathedral, off to the left is the Our Lady's Chapel, with the larger-than-life size marble figure of Mary leaning rather dangerously forward from the shallow niche in which she resides; in fact, the toes of one foot daringly step over the edge of the niche. One arm extends down to the viewer, the other reaches up to the heavens. The somewhat spiral movement of the figure and flowing drapery reference the aesthetic of Baroque figure sculpture, in particular the work of Bernini (consider his Ecstasy of St. Teresa in Rome), but Mr. Kray also notes the influence of the classical and Hellenistic period on his art (think of the Laocoön). He interestingly combines two eras to create the term "Hellenistic Baroque," which is defined by "emotional effusion."

The figure of Mary is the sculptor's only carved work, as he prefers to model the clay with his hands, evident in the preparatory maquettes for the bronze statues and other works that dot his studio. Executing a bronze statue is a laborious and lengthy process, involving considerable physicality and construction. It is this process Mr. Kray used for the Gibran Memorial Garden, dedicated to the Lebanese born writer, poet and visual artist, which is more than a sculpture: it is a fully defined memorial space, with a portrait bust of Gibran, a water feature, seating, and citations from Gibran's poetry. It is a contemplative, serene space, the first monument to an Arab-American on federal land in Washington.



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Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

As the year draws to a close and the weather forecasts call for colder temperatures, my mind keeps going back to the start of summer, specifically the one sunny, warm Saturday in June. I am thinking about our Wianki Festival and what this celebration means to all of us. On that day, we all gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial simply to listen

to music, dance, and enjoy one of the oldest Polish traditions with anyone who happened to be around. And there were people there literally from all over the world. Just as I entered the area of the festivities, I came upon a family from India, resplendent in native costumes, posing for photos with our own Krakowiaki dancers. The father of the family was lining up the grandparents and children and instructing them to stand next to the costumed dancers to snap a picture. He then pushed a button on his phone and a photo was sent to the other end of the world, maybe a big city or a tiny village somewhere in India. It was a small incident but it demonstrated how we can all connect through technology and how commonplace it has become in today's world. It also demonstrated how well we can all get along and how easily a celebration of some custom from a distant land can catch on among a diverse crowd. I watched a little black girl weaving a wreath under the watchful eye of Krysia Popso and then, in an oversized white gown, skip down to the Reflecting Pool, hand-in-hand with her new friend dressed in a Polish flowered skirt and beaded vest. My young friend, David Cook, son of a Jamaican mother and half-Polish father, who only recently became interested in his Polish roots, sang in his magnificent tenor voice the Star Spangled Banner, followed by *Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła* in clearly enunciated Polish.

All this reminded me that this kind of an event is what defines the mission of the PAAA: not only to make people aware of the richness of Polish culture but to have them participate in its propagation and make it their own.

As the new year approaches, I would like for all of us to rededicate ourselves to fulfilling this mission as we celebrate all the aspect of Polish culture in our events throughout the year, from the customs and foods of Wigilia, through the music of Chopin and Szymanowski, poetry of Mickiewicz and Szymborska, paintings of Matejko and sculptures of Gordon Kray, to the melodic folk tunes and spirited dances that we will bring again to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as we celebrate another Wianki Festival on the third Saturday of the next June.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and all the best in the New Year.

Wesołych Świąt i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku.

Celia Larkin

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Arias and Art Songs Highlight the PAAA Fall 2017 General Membership Meeting

The Polish American Arts Association Fall General Membership Meeting was held on Sunday, October 29, 2017, in the upstairs parlors of the Arts Club of Washington. Those who braved the rainy weather were rewarded with an afternoon reminiscent of a *salon* held in elegantly furnished rooms, filled with art and music.

After the opening prayer offered by Father Phillip Majka, there was a moment of silence for deceased members. The meeting started with reports from PAAA committees on past events, ongoing projects and plans for new ones: Marianna Eckel reported on the highly successful Wianki event in June, Renata Greenspan provided an update on this year's Wigilia, planned for December 10 at the Arts Club, and Ted Mirecki outlined initial plans for the Chopin Concert to be held on March 18, 2018. In absence of Scholarship Chairman Bill Klepczynski, President Celia Larkin and Dr. Laura Kafka-Price discussed proposed adjustments in the criteria for awarding PAAA scholarships.

Cecilia Glembocki brought a story board illustrating the just published second edition of the children's book "Poland, a Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions." After more than a year of hard work of revising and expanding the book to include displays on customs and traditions that were not included in the first edition, as well as the necessary fundraising to pay for it, the new product is something to be proud of. Author and illustrator Carla Tomaszewski and project director Cecilia Glembocki deserve a big applause for their effort. The book is a perfect gift for Christmas and beyond.

Following the official proceedings, those present were treated to a program of operatic arias and art songs performed by tenor David W. Cook, accompanied by pianist Alvin Smithson. David Cook, who was awarded a PAAA Scholarship this year, is gifted with a beautiful voice which he used to advantage in songs and arias by Benjamin Britten, Richard Strauss, Giuseppe Verdi, and two Polish composers: Mieczysław Karłowicz (*Pamiętam ciche jasne złote dni*) and Władysław Żeleński (*Gdy śub weźmiesz z Twoim Stachem* from the opera *Janek*). The last two selections, sung in Polish, especially endeared David to the audience. The program was rounded off by Fryderyk Chopin's Prelude in G Minor, Op. 28, No. 22, played with great feeling by Alvin Smithson on the Arts Club's Steinway piano. All in all, it was an afternoon to remember.



Photos, clockwise from top right: President Celia Larkin opens the meeting; Cecilia Glembocki talks about the children's book; Marianna Eckel gives Wianki report; Laura Kafka-Price, Alvin Smithson and Celia Larkin with former PAAA board member Paul Konopka at the reception; David Cook and Alvin Smithson perform after the meeting.



Wianki

What can one say about Wianki that hasn't been said before? The Polish American Arts Association has held the St. John's night celebrations for fifty years, thirty-five of them on the National Mall. The festivities are always a sight to behold: bursting with youthful energy, entertaining with spirited dances and songs, amazing with brilliant costumes and imbued with a sense of wellbeing. In today's world, with constant international and domestic drama, unsettling news and loud demonstrations inescapable on television and social media, a day in the most prominent place in the Nation's Capital where everyone has a smile on the face, puts a freshly woven wreath on the head and joins complete strangers in a dance to the music from a far away land, in a simple expression of pure fun, is indeed something to behold. We should all be proud that our Polish tradition brings joy to so many on this one day in June. This is our gift to all and this is all that needs to be said. Let the pictures on this page tell the rest of the story.



PAAA Awarded ACPC Matching Grant for its Chopin Concert

Each year the American Council for Polish Culture awards a matching grant to an affiliate in support of a specific project or event. This year, the PAAA received this grant in support of its Chopin Concert which will take place on March 18, 2018.

Below, PAAA president Celia Larkin (center) receives the check from the Affiliate Grant Committee Chair, Marcia Lewandowski, with Committee members Mary Ellen Tyszka, Debbie Majka, and ACPC President Tom Payne. The presentation took place at the ACPC Board meeting in Savannah, GA, in October 2017.



Wianki Thank You

The Wianki Festival requires much effort throughout the year. A big thank you for all the hard work goes to:

Marianna Eckel, Wianki Chairman,
Committee members: Stasia Skrypczuk, Carla and John Kasper, Karol Klonowski;
Krysia Popso, Wreath making workshop;
OJCZYŻNA Polish Dancers, Dennis Klima and Małgorzata Bondyra;
KRAKOWIAKI-Dance Group, Melissa Kalinowski; BROTHERS – IN-LAW Band, Stasia and Olek Skrypczuk, Richie Popso, Sr. & Richie Popso Jr.;
David Cook, Polish and US National Anthems.

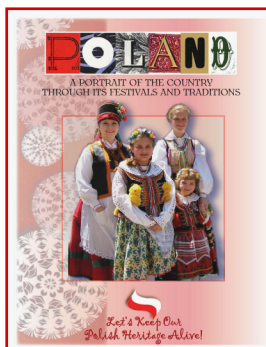
Special thanks to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland for its generous support of Wianki and to the Head of the Consular Section, Zygmunt Matynia, his wife Bożena, and Embassy staff for their presence at the festivities

Please join us again for the Wianki Festival on the National Mall on June 23, 2018.

Photos, counter clockwise from top left: A family from India lines up for a photo with Krakowiaki dancers; Ojczyzna Dancers in performance; Dick Larkin, Hanna Bondarewska and Darren Marquardt; Krakowiaki dancers and David Cook; girls in wreaths dance by the water; the youngest participant enjoying the festivities with mom; Wianki workshop; Stasia Skrypczuk with Ojczyzna's Dennis Klima and Sylvia Surowiec; Consul Zygmunt Matynia and his wife, Bożena, lead the Polonaise with Ojczyzna dancers; Krakowiaki Dancers perform; Marianna Eckel with young girls before the Wianki parade; wreathed ladies; Celia Larkin and Margaret Butler; Stasia Skrypczuk and David Cook singing with the Brothers-in-Law band; Halszka Twardo-Meares and Renata Greenspan.

To see more photos and videos from Wianki, visit www.paaa.us

Fresh off the press and ready to order



POLAND - A Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions

is a children's book project sponsored by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC. Thanks to continued support from the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Poland, as well as generous donations from the

Kościuszko Foundation, other organizations, and individual donors, we have now published the second, expanded edition of the book.

The purpose of the book is to provide a resource for children, their teachers and parents to help them learn about the customs and traditions of Poland. Our goal is to get the books distributed to various libraries, Polish schools and organizations across the country.

The book is available for \$15 for soft cover and \$24 for hard cover. Volume discounts are available. Please send your order with a check made out to the Polish American Arts Association, *noting it's for the POLAND book project*, to:

Mrs. Cecilia Glembocki,

911 Saddleback Ct., McLean, VA 22102

Email: polandchildrensbook@gmail.com

Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolandChildrensBook/>

New CD by Violinist Kinga Augustyn



PAAA members were introduced to Kinga Augustyn, Polish-born and New York City-based versatile classical concert violinist and recording artist, in May 2009, when at our invitation she performed a solo recital at the Polish Embassy. In 2016, the PAAA helped finance the production of her CD of violin music recorded with Janacek Philharmonic Ostrava in the Czech Republic. Here is what she wrote upon the release of the CD:

“It was a pleasure to perform and record music by Mendelssohn, Bruch and Massenet with such a fine orchestra as the Janacek Philharmonic. Released by Centaur Records, the recording is a step forward in my career as a violin soloist. I am very grateful to the Polish American Arts Association for its generous co-sponsorship of the project.”

To learn more about Kinga Augustyn and find out how to order her CD visit: www.kingaAugustyn.com

Remembrances

This year, we have lost some of our long time members, officers and friends, people who have contributed much not only to the PAAA but were very accomplished in their work on behalf of other Polish organizations and Polish culture in all its aspects.

Cześć ich pamięci.



Susanne S. Lotarski, like her parents, lived her Polish heritage through her active involvement in the Polish American community as well as through her professional work. Daughter of Kazimierz Lotarski, who years ago was a founding member of the Polish American Congress (PAC), she served as the Vice President for Public Relations of the PAC and since 2006 until her passing this summer, was the president of the PAC Washington Metropolitan Division. She also served as the Vice President of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, was active in the Polish National Alliance and other Polish organizations. Dr. Lotarski had an outstanding career at the Department of Commerce where she started in 1973 as the Department's Polish Desk Officer, served with distinction as Director of the East European Division during the Communist era, later the Office of Eastern Europe, Russia and the Independent States, and retired as Deputy Assistant Secretary. She was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

In the Polish American Arts Association, Susanne will always be remembered fondly for her constant presence at most of our events and for her steadfast support of PAAA's goals. She was elected as PAAA Vice President shortly after arriving in Washington in the early 70s, a fact that she brought up with pride in her speech at our 50th Anniversary Gala last year. We will miss her elegant, dedicated and always supportive presence in our midst.

Sophie Miśkiewicz-Peters, past board member of the PAAA, graduated from Alliance College in Pennsylvania and earned a Master of Arts degree in Eastern European History from Columbia University in New York. Fluent in Polish, she served as an escort-interpreter for the U.S. State Department for several years. She also served as translator for First Lady Barbara Bush when she and President George H. W. Bush visited Poland in 1989. More recently, she was a board member of the Polish American Congress where she also served in other capacities.



Bolesław "Ben" Filipczyk was known in the Polish American community as someone you could always rely on when a helping hand was needed. From instigating Polonia-wide social and political actions, to arranging meeting and event venues, to stepping on stage to emcee a Wigilia raffle, he did everything with his usual verve and sense of humor that made everyone feel good. He was responsible for putting together Pulaski-Kościuszko Day Celebrations and lobbied in a successful effort to have Congress pass a resolution awarding a posthumous honorary US citizenship to General Casimir Pulaski. Organizations such as the Polish National Alliance, Polish Legion of American Veterans, and others owe a lot to him. A Veteran of the US Army, Ben was dedicated to helping active and former service men and women cope with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Ben was always around to actively support many events and endeavors undertaken by the PAAA, where he served in the past on the board of directors. We will very much miss him.



Roma Starczewska-Murray was one of the early members of the Polish American Arts Association and served as its archivist and historian. Born in Poland, she worked as announcer and producer in the Polish Service of the Voice of America from 1967-1995. Among Poles and non-Poles alike, she was known and admired for her *Wycinanki*, the folk art form she learned in Poland from her mother. She participated in folk art festivals in the Washington area as well as

throughout the country and held demonstrations on the art of *Wycinanki*, some sponsored by the PAAA. Her works can be found in many private collections and at times show up on art trading websites.

Jan de Rosen Monument Fund

Jan de Rosen, was a great Polish artist and patriot, well known for his murals and mosaic works which can be seen in churches and shrines throughout the United States and in other countries, including the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, St. Matthew's Cathedral and The National Cathedral in Washington DC. A monument in his honor, designed by sculptor Gordon Kray, stands on the Avenue of the Meritorious at the Częstochowa Shrine in Doylestown, PA.

Now, the Polish American Arts Association has undertaken to place a smaller version of the monument at de Rosen's actual grave at the Columbia Gardens Cemetery in Arlington, VA, where he is buried according to his wishes. We need funds to complete and erect the monument. To contribute, please send your check made out to PAAA, with a note that it is for the Jan de Rosen Fund, to: Ted Mirecki, 900 N. Taylor St. No. 617, Arlington, VA 22203.

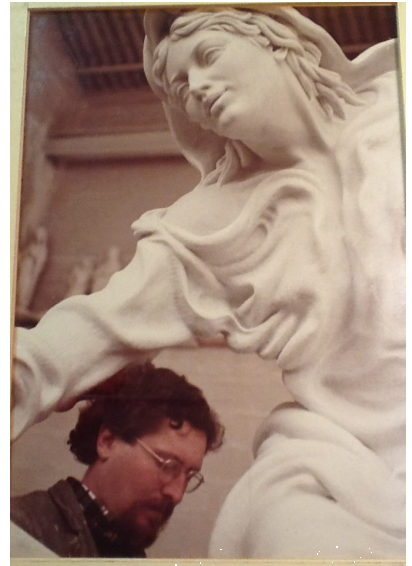
Gordon Kray - continued from page 1

In contrast, the life-size bronze statue of Pierre L'Enfant (2007) has yet to be placed in its intended home. With a statue of Frederick Douglass serving as the sole allowable representation for the District in Statuary Hall in the US Capitol Building, L'Enfant now stands in 1 Judiciary Square, "orphaned" by a political tug of war on the issue of the District not being a state. It is an imposing figure: L'Enfant stands on Jenkins Hill, the site of today's Capitol Hill, with his great coat blowing in the wind, his right arm crossed over his chest while his head turns in the other direction. The profile adheres closely to a 1785 silhouette—the only known contemporary likeness of L'Enfant—and attached to his lapel is a medallion, which L'Enfant himself designed, denoting his membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. In his other hand, L'Enfant holds a map of the plan for the federal city which he designed. All this indicates how much research and planning go into making a likeness of an historical figure of whom there are no photographs and few, if any, reliable images.

Extensive research is also clearly evident in Mr. Kray's statuary for the College of William and Mary: John Marshall with George Wythe, located at the main entrance to the Law School, dedicated in 2000; and James Monroe, in front of St. George Tucker Hall (2015). Marshall and Wythe stand in a balanced but "moving" composition, not directly facing one another but appearing to face people in their vicinity, perhaps as if they were discussing or defending a legal argument. Monroe, on the other hand, stands alone, on a circular base with a low relief frieze featuring eight panels depicting various phases of our fifth president's life. Mr. Kray noted that Monroe had a "very complicated face" that required extensive study of many portraits of varying quality from the past 200 years.

Here is the figure in its historical context: the clothes, the pose, the sense of the subject's humanity and grace. A skillful and stirring rendition by the sculptor of the assembled forms together convey to the viewer an emotion and a sense of the human being depicted, a person who existed and exists in time and space. These figures and their histories carry meaning, from the past into our present. Visit the figures in situ, walk around the free-standing figures and experience them in space, on your own time, and see what emotion is conveyed to you.

Gordon Kray was the guest speaker at the PAAA Membership meeting in May of this year. A long time member of the organization, in 1990, he executed the bas relief sculpture depicting John Brown and Cyprian Kamil Norwid for a Memorial to the American abolitionist and the Polish poet at Harpers Ferry, VA, as part of the project spearheaded by the PAAA on behalf of the American Council for Polish Culture. A second version of the Memorial plaque is in the Museum of Literature and History in Warsaw, Poland: the first international memorial dedicated in the new Republic of Poland. Mr. Kray is currently working on a memorial for the grave of the great Polish artist Jan de Rosen. The PAAA has undertaken to raise funds for the construction and placement of this memorial in the Columbia Gardens Cemetery in Arlington, VA.



Sculptures by Gordon Kray
 Left: the Kahlil Gibran Memorial on Massachusetts Avenue NW in Washington, DC. Right, top to bottom: Gordon Kray working on the statue of Mary; John Brown-Cyprian Norwid Memorial plaque, version located in the Museum of Literature and History in Warsaw; statue of Pierre L'Enfant at 1 Judiciary Square in DC, awaiting eventual placement in the Statuary Hall in the US Capitol Building. On the cover: Mr. Kray with statue of President James Monroe at the William and Mary College which they both attended; Virgin Mary reaches out of her niche in the St. Matthew's Cathedral.

PAAA Upcoming Events in 2018

Chopin Concert

Benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund
Sunday, March 18, 2018 at 4:00 PM, at the Arts Club of Washington
Featuring pianist Tom Pandolfi

PAAA General Membership and Election Meeting

May 2018, at the Arts Club of Washington.

Wianki

Annual celebration of Polish traditions of St. John's night with dancing, singing and making of wreaths. On the National Mall, Saturday, June 23, 2018

Wigilia

December 2018

Details on above and other events will be provided at: www.paaa.us

Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership

Polish-American Arts Association
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